AIR NZ PASSENGERS STRANDED IN HONG KONG

News / Airlines

Unimpressed Air New Zealand passengers have expressed their disdain after spending the night stranded in Hong Kong's airport.

Flight NZ80 was due to leave Hong Kong for Auckland at 7:00 p.m. local time (midnight Saturday New Zealand time) but after two hours of waiting onboard passengers were told the plane had engine failure.

Passengers told NZHerald.co.nz they were fed up with a lack of communication from the airline after they were forced to sit on the plane while Air New Zealand scrambled to find accommodation.

Only 19 rooms for families with children and elderly could be found, while the rest were forced to sleep at the airport.

Food vouchers were given to the travellers, but only 20 minutes before eateries shut and some of them refused to take the vouchers, passenger Anita Easton reportedly said.

Passengers were told they would be put on the next available flight at midnight local time (5:00 a.m. New Zealand time), which was then pushed back to 1:50 p.m. local time (6:50 p.m. New

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Zealand time).

The flight is scheduled to land at 6am on Monday morning.

"It took four or five hours for bottled water to be handed out. Nobody can get a shower....It's just been a complete shambles," Easton said.

Air New Zealand board chairman Tony Carter was reportedly on the flight. "He's not very impressed," she said.

In a statement, Air New Zealand said the delay was due to engineering issues affecting one of the engines.

"We have been unable to secure hotel rooms to accommodate all of the customers on this flight. We have accommodated as many customers as possible in the rooms we have been able to secure, and a number of locally based customers returned home for the night.

"Unfortunately around 80 customers remained in the terminal overnight and they have been provided with meal vouchers, blankets and pillows as well as water and snacks. They are also being offered a cash payment as a gesture of goodwill for their inconvenience.

"Unfortunately Hong Kong is currently extremely busy due to the Mid-Autumn Festival and national holiday and this has been compounded by very poor weather conditions in the region which has caused the cancellation of a number of other carriers' flights out of Hong Kong".

"We appreciate this situation has been very frustrating for our customers and thank them for their continued patience," the statement read.

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